

A1  
Contd

life. The method (10) requires that a supplier of a die provide certain material which is analyzed to determine whether the supplied material has a certain toughness. If the material has the requisite toughness, a material signature is created and used to evaluate further materials and dies produced and/or provided by the supplier.

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**In The Claims:**

Please amend the following claims.

**Claim 1 (amended, clean version):**

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A method for purchasing a first material from a supplier comprising the steps of:

obtaining a second material from said supplier;

creating a first material signature by use of said second material;

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obtaining said first material from said supplier;

creating a second material signature by use of said first material;

comparing said first and second material signatures; and

purchasing said first material only if said second and first material signatures are substantially similar.

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**Claim 7 (amended, clean version):**

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A3

A method for purchasing a die formed from a first material provided by a certain supplier, said method comprising the steps of:

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Cont'd

obtaining a second material from said supplier;  
creating a first material signature by use of said second material;  
acquiring a sample of said die;  
creating a second material signature by use of said sample;  
determining whether said first and second material signatures are substantially similar; and  
purchasing said die formed from said first material upon a determination that said first and second signatures are substantially similar.

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**Claim 13<sup>7</sup> (amended, clean version):**

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A method for approving dies respectively produced by a plurality of suppliers, said method comprising the step of:

obtaining material from each of said plurality of suppliers;

determining the presence and amount of certain constituents within each of said obtained materials, thereby creating a material signature for each of said plurality of suppliers;

obtaining a sample from each die;

determining the presence and amount of said certain constituents within each sample; and

evaluating said dies by use of said material signatures and said presence and amount of said certain constituents.

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**Claim 14<sup>8</sup> (amended, clean version):**

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